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ABSTRACT

The community college's mission as a teaching institution rather than a research institution has typically avoided placing scholarship in a central position. In 1988, the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges advocated a broad definition of scholarship encompassing the integration, application, and presentation of knowledge in the core activities of curriculum development, service, and teaching. One researcher defines scholarship as a "systematic pursuit of a topic," whereas research, which builds upon previous scholarly works and results in verifiable knowledge, empirical data, and replicable procedures, is only one form of scholarship. Many community college professionals do not engage in scholarship because conducting outside research means sacrificing teaching hours. In addition to lack of time, lack of support and encouragement from college leaders is another barrier. A third barrier to scholarship is an unwillingness among community college faculty to encroach upon what is seen as the domain of the university. Scholarship can be encouraged in a variety of ways. The mission or goals of the community college must be adjusted to include scholarship, with presidents and deans setting an example for their faculty. An effective reward system will also serve to inspire scholarship. ERIC documents offer advice and guidelines for community college professionals who are interested in being published. In addition, many state and professional associations and state agencies publish high-quality periodicals as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among their members or faculty members in their state. (JMC)

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The Role of Scholarship in the Community College

Dana Nicole Williams

The community college's mission as a teaching institution rather than a research institution has typically not placed scholarship in a central position. Jonathan Block (1991) contends that a false dichotomy is perceived between teaching and scholarship, originating in the backgrounds in public school administration and teaching of the founding presidents and faculty of community and junior colleges. Vaughan, in various articles, maintains that community college leaders must now expand the definition of scholarship, stress the important difference between research and scholarship, and ensure that scholarship becomes an expectation of faculty. Doing so will not only erase the perceived distinction between teaching and scholarship, but will also "enhance the reputation of the community college as an institution of higher learning" (Vaughan and Palmer, 1991).

Definitions of Scholarship

The Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988) advocated a broad definition of scholarship encompassing the integration, application, and presentation of knowledge in the core activities of curriculum development, service, and teaching. Vaughan (1989b) defines "scholarship" as a "systematic pursuit of a topic" that involves critical analysis and results in a product that is shared with the author's peers. On the other hand, Vaughan sees "research," which builds upon previous scholarly works and results in verifiable knowledge, empirical data, and replicable procedures, as only one form of scholarship.

Other commentators also promote an expanded definition of scholarship. Palmer (1991) posits that scholarship "must contribute to the larger profession" and that results of scholarship should be published or otherwise made available to colleagues. He also contends that faculty members must be encouraged to use their classrooms as laboratories. Boyer (1990) identifies four elements of scholarship: discovery (advancing knowledge), integration (crossing lines of discipline), application (fulfilling pragmatic needs), and teaching (enhancing pedagogy).

Parilla (1991) acknowledges the difficulty in making time for scholarship, but argues that "the critical issue is that one must be actively involved in his or her discipline or technical field in order to be an effective teacher." Once the link between teaching and scholarship is established, the importance of scholarship at the community college becomes undeniable.

Barriers to Scholarly Activity

Several community college professionals have attempted to surmise why more of their peers do not engage in scholarship--regardless of how it is defined. Many, including Parilla (1991), Vaughan (1989), and Lord (1988), believe that because the written mission of the community college does not refer to scholarship, many professionals understand that they are expected to emphasize their teaching responsibilities. Conducting outside research means sacrificing teaching hours.

In addition to lack of time, lack of support and encouragement from college leaders is another barrier. Parilla (1991) maintains that support and resources, including released time and monetary rewards, are essential to encouraging scholarship. By incorporating scholarship as an expectation for tenure and promotion, the community college validates the efforts of its faculty outside the classroom (Vaughan, 1991).

A third barrier to scholarship is an unwillingness among community college faculty to encroach upon the turf of the university. They see scholarship as a university responsibility that is not consistent with the teaching emphasis or resources of the two-year college. Vaughan (1991) states that "community college professionals must get over the feeling that they are inferior to other members of the higher education community." If colleges support scholarship efforts by faculty, instructors will gain the experience needed to incorporate scholarship into their daily activities.

Promoting Faculty Scholarship

Scholarship can be encouraged in a variety of ways. First, as Parilla (1991) notes, the mission or goals of the community college must be adjusted to include scholarship, with presidents and deans setting an example for their faculty. Templin (1991) argues that "until presidents see the connection between the teaching mission of the community college generally, and their own leadership effectiveness specifically, scholarly activity will continue to have a low priority." This also holds true for academic deans who are in a position to serve as role models for the faculty, and help prove the benefits of scholarship to community college presidents (Perkins, 1991).

An effective reward system will include various persuasive tactics. Though financial incentives and release time are two of the most requested rewards, community college professionals also desire recognition for their efforts by their peers and leaders (Lord, 1988). Most faculty members publish for the intrinsic rewards, combining research and instruction to fulfill personal goals. Sutherland (1989) finds this particularly true of "high functional" instructors, who also tend to be rated by their students as better teachers.

Writing for Publication

ERIC documents offer advice and guidelines for community college professionals who are interested in being published. Eldor Peterson's (1990) study, "Community College Periodicals," lists 35 periodicals dealing primarily with community college education. His analysis of the content and distribution of these journals reveals that most of the journals have limited distribution and most are geared toward administrators and higher education faculty, rather than community college faculty. Lumsden and Fuller's 1984 article, "Publishing Opportunities for Community College Educators," continues to provide a valuable analysis of the content, audience, circulation, and manuscript requirements of 15 of the periodicals serving the community college field. The major journals in the field are *Community College Review, Community/ Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice, Community Services Catalyst, Community, Technical, and Junior College Journal,* and *New Directions for Community Colleges*. In addition, many state and professional associations and state agencies are currently publishing high quality periodicals as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among their members or faculty members in their state.

Zebrowski and Werner (1984) offer a list of 25 suggestions for writing a textbook for publication, including (1) teach a related course four or five times before beginning to write; (2) research the effectiveness of pedagogical methods as measured by test results and student input; and (3) involve students as critics in the preparatory stages of the manuscript and when the text is first published. Thus, textbook writing can be seen as a form of scholarship, combining what teachers enjoy most, teaching, with scholarly research.

Sutherland's (1989) exploration of the writing for publication of community college faculty indicates that instruction is the most pervasive topic, while Griffiths (1989) finds that community college presidents tend to write on the subjects of coping with change, institutional finances, and declining enrollments. Griffiths also indicates that while the range of topics addressed by presidents in their publications is huge, topics such as curriculum development, instructional methods, and philosophy of education tend to be avoided.

Conclusion

As the definition of scholarship expands to include all non-classroom efforts to advance the teaching profession, more community college professionals will engage in scholarship and encourage their peers to do the same. But such involvement in non-instructional work will only increase if community college leaders choose to support the efforts of their faculty and administrators.

As Vaughan (1989b) states, "All community college professionals should be scholars, for it is through scholarship that a disciplined passion for learning manifests itself, and it is this passion for learning that sustains effective teaching and effective administration."

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Several of the articles cited in this digest will appear in *Enhancing Teaching and Administration through Scholarship*, New Directions for Community Colleges, Number 76, edited by George Vaughan and Jim Palmer to be published by Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, in December 1991. The cited articles include: "Editors' Notes," by George B. Vaughan and James C. Palmer; "False Dichotomies," by Jonathan Block; "Nurturing Scholarship at Community Colleges," by James C. Palmer; "Presidential Scholarship and Educational Leadership in the Community College," by Robert G. Templin; and "Scholarship in the Community College: A President's Perspective," by Robert E. Parilla.

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